
Federal stem cell legislation unlikely in lame duck session

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Science had a story this morning about what yesterday's elections mean for stem cell funding. In it they suggest it's unlikely that the lame duck congressional session will bring legislation to expressly legalize federal funding for human embryonic stem cell research, writing:

“I don't think it's going to be a priority for them,” says Jennifer Zeitzer of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology in Bethesda, Maryland. Her bottom line: “The outlook for stem cells is even less certain now than it was yesterday.” A legal challenge to federal funding for human embryonic stem cell research is set to be heard Dec. 6. Until then, the NIH is continuing to fund existing grants that involve human embryonic stem cells, but is not giving out new awards. Some CIRM grantees including Joanna Wysocka of Stanford University and Paul Knoepfler of UC, Davis have received scores on NIH proposals that would normally result in getting grants funded. Instead, they are putting projects on hold that could lead to insights in developmental disorders and tumor formation.

Wisconsin, which the home of the first human embryonic stem cell line, voted in both a governor and senator who oppose the research their state helped create.

A.A.

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